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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SR153/SCR190 - REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO ASSESS THE ADEQUACY OF THE DEPARTMENT'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR A CAREER IN A VOCATION.

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

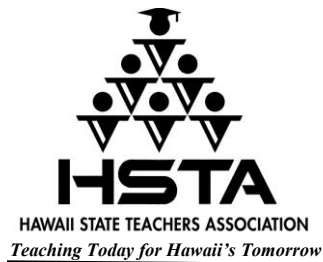
Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association supports SR 153/SCR 190, requesting the Department of Education to conduct a study to assess the adequacy of the department's vocational education programs to prepare students of a career in a vocation.

A majority of all current job openings, both locally and nationally, are for positions that do not require a college degree. While education reform rhetoric extols “college and career readiness,” job projections by the Hawai'i Department of Labor show that, overall, more than 70 percent of the state's projected openings through 2022 require a high school diploma or less. For comparison, about 15 percent of future openings require a bachelor's degree and only 4 percent require a master's, doctoral, or professional degree.

Yet, there is concern among CTE/vocational education stakeholders (teachers, industry experts, and employers) about the cutbacks to CTE/vocational education programming. As a result of a federal and state emphasis on high stakes accountability over the past decade, secondary schools across the United States have diverted CTE funding to core content areas, especially English Language Arts and mathematics, and cutting CTE/vocational programs.

Vocational education/CTE offerings at our public schools must be expanded to allow young people to design their own futures. According to a national study, only 25 percent of polled job seekers reported receiving career pathing in high school, with 41 percent saying that they wished they had received more vocational guidance.



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Careers taught through the department's vocational programming/CTE—from financial management to civil engineering to teaching—are at the core of our local economy, requiring real-world skills that benefit both students and employers alike.

Vocational training, now called CTE, should be a viable alternative to college, which is increasingly cost prohibitive for high school graduates and their families (though, notably, students who obtain CTE certifications attend college a higher rate than students who do not). Expanding these programs would allow the 44 percent of Hawai'i high school graduates who do not seek post-secondary education to have more opportunities to receive industry-based skills and certifications required to join the 21st Century job market while still in high school.

To know what other vocational/CTE programs are needed in our public schools, so that the HDOE is able to expand their offerings, to better prepare students to become members of the modern workforce that includes CTE, The Hawaii State Teachers Association asks that your committee to **support** SR 153/SCR 190.